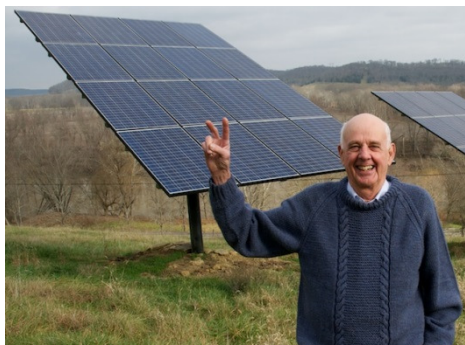


About the author



Wendell Berry stands beside solar panels on his farm. Photo by Guy Mendes.

Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry was born in Henry County, Kentucky, in 1934 to a lawyer and tobacco farmer amid the Great Depression. Raised working on his family's farm, values of strong local economies, agrarian lifestyles, and sustainable agriculture became imbedded in Berry at a young age.

After earning his BA and MA from the University of Kansas, he received a Wallace Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University. Subsequently he lectured at New York University for two years before returning to Kentucky where he bought a farm and taught creative writing.

Described by the New York Times as a "modern day Thoreau", much of his work stresses the importance of establishing harmony between the environment and people. His criticism of the Vietnam War, international security strategy, and the death penalty as well as his 50+ published works have earned him the National Humanities Medal, T.S. Eliot Award, and membership to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Berry works on his farm in Port Royal, Kentucky where his family has been established for over 200 years^{1,2,3,4,5}.

¹ Counterpoint. (2007). The author. In *Wendell Berry books*. Retrieved April 3, 2014, from <http://www.wendellberrybooks.com/author.html>

² Robinson, J. K. (1995). Wendell Berry: overview. In T. Riggs (Ed.), *Contemporary Poets* (6th ed.). New York: St. James Press. Retrieved from <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CH1420000775&v=2.1&u=burl53467&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w&asid=09386fb39aed29a2c97cca3b5730bbb7>

³ Skinner, D. (2012). Wendell E. Berry Biography. In *National Endowment for the Humanities*. Retrieved April 3, 2014, from <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-biography>

⁴ Wendell Berry. (n.d.). In *The Poetry Foundation*. Retrieved April 3, 2014, from <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/wendell-berry>

⁵ Bittman, M. (2012, April). Wendell Berry, American Hero. In *New York Times Blogs*. Retrieved April 3, 2014, from <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/wendell-berry-american-hero>

Discussion questions

- What does this book tell us about progress?
- Do you think this book is radical? Nostalgic? Sensible?
- Discuss Cecelia Overhold's role in Jayber's life. What might be some reasons that she targeted him as an enemy? Why do you think Berry included her character in the story?
- What do you think about Jayber's deep love for Mattie Keith Chatham? Why is Jayber so committed to her?
- How did Jayber describe his faith and spiritual beliefs?
- Does this book remind you of any others you have read? In what ways?

Further reading

More by Wendell Berry:

A timbered choir : the Sabbath poems / Wendell Berry. Washington, D.C. : Counterpoint, c1998. 216 pages.

The unsettling of America : culture & agriculture / Wendell Berry. San Francisco : Sierra Club Books, 1986. 228 pages.

Watch with me : and six other stories of the yet-remembered Ptolemy Proudfoot and his wife, Miss Minnie, née Quinch / Wendell Berry. Washington, D.C. : Counterpoint, c1998. 210 pages.

Similar reads:

My Ántonia, by Willa Cather

Compass rose, by John Casey

Eventide, by Kent Haruf

All over creation, by Ruth Ozeki